1:Haskins K-4,5 (1952-1954)1956 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11

CHAPTER II

PHYSICAL SETTING

121 Introduction. The analysis of the physical setting of the
• 13 Recôncavo which follows is intended primarily as a background for the interpretation of agricultural phenomena. As such, it is particularly concerned with those physical elements--flat and rough lands, productive and unproductive soils, humid and dry climates, and exploitable wild vegetation--which bear directly upon crop cultivation and animal industry. The statistical and map information and the literature on these physical elements are very limited. The general procedure used in developing this analysis was to formulate inferences based upon these limited sources and then to confirm or modify the inferences by field observation.

13 The narrow coastal plain and tabular uplands, the humid and sub-humid climates, the soils, and the forest and scrub forest vegetation typical of the northeast of Brazil are also characteristic of the Recôncavo. However, the presence of a rift occupied by the Baía de Todos os Santos and by a compact lowland pocket has given these characteristic features a distinctive geographical pattern in the Recôncavo.

Transition is a basic feature of the physical setting in which the economic and social institutions of the northeast of Brazil have been developed. Throughout the Northeast there are profound environmental differences between the coast and the interior. Even in as restricted an area as the Recôncavo, the rapid transition from the humid coastal lowland to the drier interior upland is a significant element in the regional complex.

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133 correlations are in part only apparent: they result from using geologic and topographic categories to map and classify soils.

13 Both climate and vegetation are also important factors in soil formation. Since the Recôncavo is a zone of sharp transitions in climate and vegetation, it is to be expected that these variations would be reflected in the soil pattern. In the Recôncavo, however, patterns of climate and vegetation generally re-enforce the patterns of material and terrain as they affect soils. The Cretaceous coastal lowlands are the most humid part of the Recôncavo. The inland Tabular and Crystalline Uplands, which is to say the Tertiary and crystalline soil zones, are markedly drier, as will be seen below. Thus the boundary between the Cretaceous and non-Cretaceous soils approximates a climatic transition, a transition which is also the forest and scrub-forest boundary.

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241 The soils of the Recôncavo have been used for agricultural purposes for a long time--for about 400 years in the Cretaceous zone. They have been used with varying intensity: in the Cretaceous zone under an intensive monoculture, in the other soils zones under less intensive systems of field and fallow or as wild pasture. The affects of this prolonged use, with little soil conservation, can be only inferred. In the Cretaceous zone there is much complaint of low sugar cane yields, and a few cultivators are turning to commercial fertiliser. It is not clear whether these complaints and remedies result from a marked deterioration of the soil or from the declining competitive position of the sugar industry of the Recôncavo. In the crystalline zone it seems likely that only in the last few decades has cultivation become sufficiently intensive to cause--through shortening the fallow period--the deterioration of the soils. This affect is now beginning to be noticeable in the relatively intensively cultivated lands near the Rio Paraguaçu.

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31 similar to caatinga sêca appear where soil and moisture conditions would seem to indicate caatinga grande. These areas are especially common where cultivation and grazing are intensive.

The wild vegetation of the Recôncavo is used for forage, timber, [313] and fuel. Only the mata is used for timber, and it is exploited only on a small scale. All three of the main vegetation types contribute toward supplying the local market with fuel--firewood and charcoal. The [314] mata is the principal charcoal source, especially in the forest zone northwest of the city of Salvador and along the Salvador-Feira de Santana highway. In the interior sections of the Recôncavo the caatinga and the agreste provide firewood for cooking and other household purposes. For grazing, the caatinga is far superior to the agreste and the mata, except when the latter is in the first stages of regrowth. Burning is employed extensively in an effort to increase the grazing value of the caatinga and agreste. At first this provides more grass and herbaceous growth, but after repeated burning and continuous over-grazing, there develops an impenetrable cover of thorny, tough brush, three to five feet tall, and quite valueless.[35]

• 13 Conclusion - Physical Setting. The analysis of the physical setting which is to serve as background for the discussion of agriculture in the Recôncavo does not reveal a homogeneous region. Rather it would seem that the Recôncavo is best visualized as a nodal region, with a relatively homogeneous but areally restricted core and a broad transitional perimeter. The perimeter is composed of several sub-regions, each with a distinctive transitional character. As a summation of [128] the physical setting, each of the sub-regions of the perimeter and core of the Recôncavo will be assigned a name, as a matter of convenience, with the physical elements briefly indicated for each:[36]

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• 13 Central Recôncavo: a zone of Coastal Plain and lower Intermediate Hills north of the Bay. It is humid and, when uncultivated, forested. Its soils are of the Cretaceous series, chiefly clay and clay-sands.

Northern Recôncavo: a zone of dry, Tabular Uplands, with caatinga in the west and agreste in the east. Its soils are Tertiary sands except in the deeper valleys, where Cretaceous soils appear.

Northwestern Recôncavo. a zone of crystalline soils and caatinga vegetation. Most of the area is Crystalline Upland, but there are extensive sandy taboleiros. This is one of the driest sections of the Recôncavo.

Southwestern Recôncavo: The Crystalline Uplands south of the Rio Paraguaçu are less sandy and more humid than the Northwestern Recôncavo. This zone is mata in the east and south, caatinga in the west and southwest. Its soils are of the crystalline series but less sandy than is characteristic in the Northwestern Recôncavo.

Eastern Recôncavo: a small zone of relatively humid, agreste covered Tabular Uplands and Intermediate Hills.

Southern Recôncavo: The most diverse of the sub-regions it is composed of three sections: (1) the Bay littoral south of the estuary of the Paraguaçu; (2) the island of Itaparica; and (3) the peninsula of Salvador. It is forested and humid and is either rough Coastal Plain or Intermediate Hills, with mixed crystalline, Cretaceous, and Tertiary soils.

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13 The physical setting of the tobacco and manioc region is distinctive in terms of the particular combination of topography, soils, climate, and vegetation which are joined along its crescent axis. The region lies along the semi-circular edge of the interior upland, overlooking the Bay and the Coastal Plain. In the south the fields of manioc and tobacco occupy the upper surfaces of the Crystalline Uplands and the adjacent Intermediate Hills. In the north, cultivation shifts to the summits and upper slopes of the Intermediate Hills, although there is some concentration on the extreme southern edge of the tabuleiros. Thus the region occupies the deep flat-lying residual crystalline soils in the south but in the Tertiary soil zone to the north follows the slope lands where there is more rainfall and perhaps better local soils. The close correspondence of this region with the forest and scrub-forest transition has been repeatedly emphasized. A traverse across the tobacco-manioc region anywhere between Conceição do Almeida and Feira de Santana takes one from rough hills with at least scattered patches of broadleaf evergreen forest to flat uplands with cactus, thorny brush, and licuri palms.

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361 A comparison of the map of population (Map 21) and of the relationship of tobacco and manioc cultivation (Map 75) points up the necessity for local sources of basic subsistence products. In the Southwest, where rural populations are relatively dense and where there are a number of large villages and towns, manioc tends to be cultivated over a greater area than does tobacco. In the tobacco-manioc region north of the Rio Paraguaçu, where tobacco is usually the leading crop, the density of rural population is lower, and there are no towns and only [438] a few large villages. Thus there is close relationship between the relative intensity of manioc and the size of the local market.

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244 The recent historical pattern of agriculture in the tobacco-manioc region can be reconstructed only on a general level. Cachoeira, which

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Cachoeira, which formerly included most of the western part of the region, was the center of the production of tobacco for use in the slave trade. The growth of the trade in leaf tobacco in the nineteenth century brought great changes to the region, for it made tobacco a major commercial product in its own right, no longer dependent upon the slave trade. Eventually this development gave the region of tobacco production a greater economic importance than the sugar cane region, although it remained subordinate in political and social influence. The development of the new tobacco economy also gave the region a greater superiority over the sertão, which could satisfactorily produce fumo em corda, but could grow only the poorest grades of fumo em fôlha.

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Probably the tobacco-manioc region supplied manioc as the subsistence food of the sugar economy, since it is the only nearby area which was a center of manioc production. Perhaps manioc was produced in the sugar cane zone, but in view of the intensity of sugar cane cultivation, this seems doubtful. In any case, the present relative level of manioc production in this crop region probably dates from the nineteenth century development of cigar tobacco production.

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The second basic crop region of the Recôncavo is the sugar cane monocultural area. It is sub-divided into a major zone, in Santo Amaro, São Sebastião, and São Francisco; a minor zone in Cachoeira; and an outlier in São Filipe. It is estimated that in the first two zones 90 per cent of the cropland was in cane in 1948. In the São Filipe outlier of the sugar cane region the proportion seems to have been lower--perhaps 50 per cent of the cultivated area.

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The physical association of the sugar cane region north of the Rio Paraguaçu and the Bay is relatively simple--a humid and formerly forested undulating plain composed of mixed Cretaceous soils--massapê, salão, and aréia. In São Filipe the land is rougher, but the sugar cane is grown upon heavy soils similar to the Cretaceous series.

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OOO Footnotes - Chapter VIII

[1]Recenseamento Geral do Brasil: 1940. Censos Econômicos, Bahia, Vol. II.

[2]The data for the total area of the various municipios used in this analysis are taken from Características Demográficas do Estado da Bahia, No. 8. These data are the most recent and presumably most accurate available for the state of Bahia. In a number of cases they disagree markedly with area given in the 1940 census, which was based upon earlier and probably less accurate calculations from older maps.

[129] [3]The distinction between large- and small-scale units was made in the census as follows: (1) Agricultural units with over 50 hectares in "major crops (pineapple, alfalfa, cotton, rice, oats, potatoes, sugar cane, rye, barley, beans, tobacco, castor beans, manioc, corn, wheat, coffee, cacao, coconuts, oranges, bananas, or grapes) were large-scale. All others were small-scale. Area in these crops was estimated from production figures and mean yields. (2) Livestock units with 200 head of cattle or sheep; 100 head of horses, goats, or pigs; or 50 asses or mules, or an appropriate combination of these, were large-scale. Alternatively, a smaller number of reproductive females--100 cows or ewes; 60 mares; or 20 sows--made the unit large-scale. All others were small-scale. (3) Crop-livestock units, in order to qualify as large-scale units, had to satisfy both criteria simultaneously.

[241] [13] [84] [261] [4]The size, shape, and physical and economic diversity of many of the municípios of the Recôncavo make it very difficult to evaluate and to map mean data. This is particularly true of Santo Amaro, of which part is in the sugar cane region, part in the tobacco-manioc region, and part in sparsely settled forest land. It is also true for São Gonçalo, which stretches from the humid Intermediate Hills to the dry western caatinga. Of all the municípios, only São Félix and Conceição da Feira, both very small, have a relatively homogeneous landscape. The details of the interpretations and, to an even greater extent, the maps were drawn with numerous inferences based upon correlative data and field observations.

[5]Agricultural properties are also held by religious orders, syndicates, cooperatives, and other legal persons, but such properties are not very common in the Recôncavo. "Squatters," as defined by the census, included both those who occupied public land legally but without title and those who illegally occupied private land. Renters included both cash and share renters.

[6]There were about 50 administrator-operated properties, with an average size of 30 hectares, in the município of São Félix, according to the census. The reasons for this concentration are not apparent, especially since this local phenomenon was not studied in the field. The concentrations around Salvador and on the island of Itaparica are suburban country houses--chácaras--a Brazilian institution. Many of these chácaras are on small properties which are operated by an overseer and which produce some agricultural products, especially vegetables and fruits. A large number of these properties line the eastern shore of the island of Itaparica; there are also a few in the forested area around Salvador.

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Vila Recôncavo

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RACE RELATIONS IN A RURAL COMMUNITY OF THE BAHIAN RECÔNCAVO[1]

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by
HARRY W. HUTCHINSON

I. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, a narrow strip along the north-eastern coast of Brazil in what are now the States of Pernambuco, Alagoas, Sergipe and Bahia, was the most important region of economic, political and social life in the whole colony. The rainfall along this portion of the coast is dependable and the extremely fertile soil, which was originally covered with thick forests, was ideally suited for sugar cane. By the seventeenth century, this region produced a large part of the world's sugar supply. Sugar, which was then a luxury in Europe, brought fabulous profits, and the north-eastern coast of Brazil became an exceedingly prosperous colony. Large cities grew up along the coast; Salvador in Bahia and Recife in Pernambuco became the most important centres of colonial life, and Salvador was the capital of the colony from 1549 to 1763. Both were cities of great wealth based on the booming sugar industry. The numerous churches built in Salvador during the period of opulence, with their elaborate gold-leafed wood carving and polychrome tile work, are witnesses to the tremendous wealth of the era.

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It was the plantation system, the basis of this lucrative sugar industry, which gave this region many of its characteristic traditions and formed patterns of race relations which have persisted in a modified form into the present. Gilberto Freyre in his monumental *Casa Grande e Senzala*, and other Brazilian writers [1],[2] have described life on these sugar plantations. African slaves provided the manpower. More than three million Negroes were imported from Africa during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and a large proportion came to the sugar plantations of north-eastern Brazil. The Portuguese plantation owners became rich, and came to form a regional aristocracy with a luxurious and ostentatious way of life. The slaves and their masters, on these plantations, formed two distinct social groups, but it is distinctive of the region that their relations were intimate and warm; Freyre describes the intimacy between the *moleque* (Negro lad) and the master's son as playmates, between the master's wife and her domestic servants, between the Negro nurse and her white charges, and other close

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[1] In addition to thanking those persons listed in the introduction to this series of articles for their aid and co-operation in making this study possible, I wish to thank the Henry L. and Grace Doherty Charitable Foundation Inc. and the Department of Anthropology of Columbia University, whose grants of funds contributed largely to the possibility of this study. Also, to acknowledge with thanks the aid of Carmelita Junqueira Ayres and Elza Amélia Ferreira for their assistance in the collection of the data.

[2] The figures in brackets refer to the bibliography on page 46.